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REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Final Office Action dated January 6, 2006. Claims 1-31 were examined, all of which were finally rejected.

In the present Office action: claims 1, 12, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,306,967 (hereinafter "Dow") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,414,542 (hereinafter "Lin"); and claims 2-11, 13-21 and 23-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dow in view of Lin and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0072332 (hereinafter "Tomsio").

At the outset, Applicants note that Tomsio is not available as a prior art reference under 35 U.S.C. §103(c) as Tomsio and the claimed invention of the present application were, at the time the claimed invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person.


With respect to the rejection of Applicants' independent claims 1, 12 and 22, Applicants again agree that Dow does not teach or suggest storing a second digital signal in a buffer along a second signal path. However, Applicants again respectfully disagree that Lin teaches storing a second digital signal in a buffer along a second signal path and also re-inverting a first digital signal at a final destination, as is set forth in claims 1, 12 and 22, in one form or another. As previously noted, while Lin discloses the use of buffers, Lin buffers all paths (when buffers are implemented) and specifically discloses the utilization of inverters in even numbers (see for example Figs. 1 and 2), which, in fact, teaches away from Applicants' claimed subject matter (i.e., re-inverting a signal at a final destination). Thus, at least in this respect, Lin and Dow are mutually exclusive. Moreover, the Lin buffers (sense-inverting or sense-preserving) are designed to provide approximately equal delays on throughgoing signals (see Lin col. 3, lines 52-53) and not, as alleged by the Office action "to provide[s] propagation time decreases which offset the propagation time increases cause by the inverter, thereby minimizing delays..."

For at least the above reasons, independent claims 1, 12 and 22 are allowable over the combination of Lin and Dow. Additionally, Applicants submit that dependent claims 2-11, 13-

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21 and 23-31 are also allowable for at least the reason that they depend upon an allowable claim and Tomsio is not available as a prior art reference under 35 U.S.C. §103(c).

Claims 1-31 are in the case. All claims are believed to be allowable over the applied art of record, and a Notice of Allowance to that effect is respectfully solicited. Nonetheless, if any issues remain that could be more efficiently handled by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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